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Assyrian 'kalmat,' Arabic 'kaemlet'

Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets, part 14 publishes on Plate 1 and 2 the original text of K 71a of the Kouyunjik Collection. The obverse contains a systematic enumeration of vertebrate animals in Sumerian and Akkadian languages, and the reverse principally insects. The subdivision is evidently the old arrangement by 2, 4, 8 &c. classes and subclasses which can be traced from the oldest Egyptian time down into the 8 zoological classes of Linné. The fourth principal subdivision of the insects of K 71a are the parasites. Two short introductory arrangements of eight lines explain the Sumerian pronunciation of different common caterpillars and parasites. More than 23 lines follow explaining parasitic insects as far as the old Babylonians were able to come to a correct zoological classification. And they were abler in this than the classic Greeks. The ideogram for 'parasite' is phonetically explained as *kal-ma-tu(m)*. This *kalmatu* is evidently the same as Arabian *kaemlet* meaning the louse. In the Arabian language the root forms different words meaning parasite, louse, tick, ant, scolopendra, curculio &c. and also parvenu (usurer?): The root includes as verb the idea of becoming swollen or fat. It includes the idea of thistle as the lexicographers tell. It seems to me that burdock, thistle and *Bidens* as very closely connected genera of the Composita are confounded and must be included. Their fruits or seeds stick to the fur and clothes as the tick to the skin. *Echeneis Remora* and *Echeneis Naucratis* are species of *kaemlet* for the Arabian language. They are fishes of one foot and six feet length respectively. They have a sucking disk on the head; this can be attached to larger fishes or ships like a tick. The original idea of the root in this case cannot be the general small parasite. It is only the idea of adherence. The original idea of the root of *kalmatu* and *kaemlet* is the adherent tick. *Kamal* originally meant to be like a tick or to have ticks. This leads to the comparative idea for plants and plant seeds which adhere for seed propagation like ticks to the hair of animals and it leads again to the idea of a parasitic or other engrossment like ticks. This primary idea of the Babylonian-Arabian root must be kept in mind for the explanation of the *kalmatu*-chapter of K 71a.

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